

International Studies Program

Annual Report 2008-2009

The total number of INTS majors has been growing. Institutional Research listed 69 majors in Fall 2008 up from 46 in Fall 2004. The number of student names in the Blackboard list of majors was substantially higher (a number that includes students ready to graduate but also students enrolled in overseas programs that may not show up on official records). 2/3 of INTS majors were women. Only 9/69 were white (however, 15/69 were "other"). 13/69 were international students. See Chart 1. Unless otherwise noted, student responses are drawn from the exit questionnaire completed by students in the INTS senior seminar.

Implementing the INTS assessment plan remains difficult due to rising numbers in classes and the failure to complete the assessment forms by some faculty. One faculty member, with a class of 75, wrote that she simply could not do the individual assessment on which the INTS plan depends. Other instructors simply refuse to fill out the forms. The replacement instructor for the senior seminar was not able to complete the assessment grids, making it impossible to compare the seminar paper and presentation results against earlier courses.

Aggregate assessment results from INTS 3100 in W 2009 (taken in either the junior or senior year) give a snapshot of skill levels among INTS majors. Oral English posed the most serious problem with 7/22 needing tutoring and another 5/22 needing to improve. For only 9/22 was oral English competent or an area of strength. Reading skills were better with only 5/18 needing tutoring or requiring improvement while 7/18 were competent and another 8 were strong. Written English was also better. 8/20 needed to improve; 9/20 were competent; 4/20 were strong English writers. All these scores were an improvement over 2008. There was also a change of instructors.

Students fulfill the language requirement by completing high school in a language other than English, completing two years of college-level language courses, or successfully completing a challenge exam at the 2nd year level. 4 graduating seniors took a challenge exam. A major problem has been the cut backs in CSUEB language courses. This is source of constant student complaints. Increasingly, students are going to community colleges, other Bay Area CSUs, or to private language schools in order to achieve second language competency. However, INTS majors do take foreign languages while at CSUEB. 8/11 said that they had improved their language skills while at CSUEB. Many students take a year or more of a third language.

INTS majors credit the university in general and the INTS program in particular with helping them to develop academic skills. INTS majors with limited English language proficiency are in need of assistance to reach competency in written and oral English. 4/6 non-native speakers of English said that their English had improved considerably while at CSUEB. 2/6 said that they were still not comfortable with written and oral English. INTS majors do make use of the

available language resources on campus. 6/12 graduating seniors said that they had used the SCAA and that it had been a valuable experience. 9/12 said that they had used the Communications Laboratory. However, the international students in particular would like to see more academic support for non-native speakers of English. 13/13 students said that their writing skills had improved at CSUEB. 7/11 credited the INTS major (especially INTS 3100 and 4500) with helping them to improve their writing skills. 12/12 thought that their research skills had improved at CSUEB. 12/12 believed that the INTS program had helped. 11/13 said that they had consulted with a reference librarian. 10/11 credited the INTS major with improving their oral communication skills.

INTS majors (13/13) are overwhelmingly satisfied with their choice of majors. They chose the major out of personal interest, cultural affinity, career goals, and large course selection. Most graduating seniors (9/12) were satisfied with their CSUEB education; several mentioned increasing difficulty in getting courses needed to graduate.

INTS majors who participate in study abroad were very satisfied with the experience (4/5). However, cost remains a serious limiting factor. 8/10 said that they would have considered study abroad had financial aid been available.

7/7 students reported that their internship was a positive experience. 9/10 thought that it was a useful component of the major. 7/7 thought that the INTS program adequately prepared them for the internship.

The Work Performance Evaluation submitted by internship supervisors provides one of the few sources of external evaluation of our students. Again in 2008-2009, work supervisors were wildly enthusiastic about their (mostly unpaid) interns. 10/10 were judged excellent or very good in overall quality of work. 7/10 were very quick learners. 7/10 had excellent interpersonal skills. 7/10 made exceptionally mature judgments. 7/10 were completely dependable. Furthermore, INTS interns wrote clearly and concisely or very well (9/10). 6/10 had clear and concise verbal skills. 8/10 had exceptional listening/comprehension skills. The overall performance of all INTS interns was either outstanding or very good. 9/10 attended regularly. 10/10 were punctual.

8/8 students were satisfied or very satisfied with their academic advisor. However, several students would like to see the advisor help them with overall GE advising as well. 5/6 students found the office support staff to be helpful. 4/6 students felt that INTS advisors had been helpful with career counseling. 5/10 said that they had found the Career Development Center to be helpful. However, there was a complaint that the CDC could not help international students.

7/10 said that they had not attended any INTS program or club events. 3/10 were involved in the Model UN Club. One student would like to see a language exchange program. Another would like to see overseas programs.

Graduating seniors were asked to rate the required courses in the major. For the first time a majority of students (5/9) was dissatisfied with their social science methods course. Still, several liked it very much. One problem is that there is no dedicated INTS methods course. Students choose from among a list of courses. Only a limited number of courses are available in any one quarter. None has international content. Given the increasing numbers of INTS majors, it may be time to consider a separate INTS methods course. Alternately, the program could discuss the possibility of introducing international content into the most popular methods courses (SOC 3000; POSC 3300; Psych 2020).

Graduating seniors continue to find the seminar challenging but rewarding. 12/12 found it to be a valuable capstone course for the major. 12/12 also found it to be a positive (thought challenging and stressful). 8/12 thought that they were adequately prepared for the seminar.

7/7 rated Cultural Anthropology positively. 7/7 rated Cultural Geography positively. 9/10 rated Economic Geography positively. 10/10 rated Global Systems positively. 10/10 rated 10th Century World History positively.

In spite of growing difficulty in registering for courses, 6/7 students said that they had been able to get the courses they needed for their emphasis (sometimes by changing the emphasis). 9.5/10 students felt that the major courses fit together well. 10/11 felt that there was not overlap or that the overlap in course content was positive. Overall, the reduction in course offerings is having a negative impact. 6/10 said that they had had difficulty registering for the courses that they needed to graduate. Thus far, the program has adapted to the reduction in course offerings and the rising number of closed courses with case-by-case substitutions for required and emphasis courses. However, consideration might be given to formally expanding the list of courses that meet core requirements or offering core courses more frequently.